

A

REVIEW

OF THE

Affairs of *FRANCE*:

With Observations on TRANSACTIONS at Home.

Tuesday, April 10. 1705.

THE last Paper presented you with a Gentleman that will have all or the most part of our Grievance in Trade, lie in our Neighbours Under-selling us in our Manufactures; and that therefore, if I will do any thing for the Benefit of our Trade, I must find out some way to come Cheaper to Market.

Before I come to Answer this Head, which in course is at Hand, I must a little Enquire, whether it be really true in Fact, that our Neighbours do Under-sell us, which, by the way, I am of Opinion, is not so.

By Under-selling in Trade, two Things are to be understood.

1. When two Tradesmen, or two Nations, for 'tis all one, making the same sort of Goods, equal in Value, and Goodness of Make, one can afford them Cheaper than the other; and in this case, he that sells lowest, will certainly have all the Trade.

2. When one Tradesman makes a meaner sort of Goods than his Neighbour, which being brought to Market, tempts the Buyer, by the Lowness of the Price to make them answer the End of the other; and so gains upon the Trade by the Ignorance and Weakness of the Buyer, not the Goodness of his Ware.

In the first sence of these two I affirm, no Nation can Under-sell the *English* in their Ma-

nufactures, I mean the Making considered; for with all the Advantages of Cheap Eiving, and Cheap Working, the Foreign Rivals we have in Trade, do not, and cannot make Wodden Manufactures of equal Goodness, and sell them Cheaper than ours.

If there is any thing, in which they have the Advantage, it is, that they can, indeed go Cheaper to Sea, Build, Furnish, and Navigate their Ships Cheaper than the *English*, and this is an Evil of another Nature, and which I recommend to those People to Answer, who start this Case; which, if they fail in, as I doubt they will, I may speak to in its turn.

From this I might Answer this Gentleman's Instance about *Dantzick*, by telling him, That when he says, We us'd to send 100 Bales of Cloth to *Dantzick* in a Year, and now send scarce one; and from thence Argues the Decay of our Trade; he falls into a manifest Error, and I would inform him of a Mystery in Trade, which perhaps he may know as well as I, but forgot to mention here, viz. That tho' we may not send one Bale of Cloth a Year to *Dantzick*, which yet I do not grant, yet there are many Bales of *English* Cloth sent thither still; and Excepting the Interruption of the War in *Poland*, perhaps, as many as usual; and here, indeed, appears the Riddle I speak of, viz. That the *Dutch* can Buy our Goods here, carry them

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Over to *Holland*, and from thence to other Countries, and yet Sell our own Goods at those Countries Cheaper than we.

If this be true, as is very Easie to make out, then there must be some other Reason why our Neighbours Under-sell us, than the bare Price of our Manufactures.

'Twould be very hard now, and make a horrid Gap in the Nations Stock, as well as Credit, that our Manufactures should be oblig'd to sink their Value to make good the Deficiency of our ill-manag'd Navigation, and other Improvident Circumstances of Trade; which filling us with Misfortunes in Trade, drive us to ruine one part to relieve another.

If these Gentlemen, quitting the Deficiencies and Misfortune of our Trade, which as Accidents to it, bear it down with the Weight of their own Mischiefs, will fly to the Foundation, and have the Substantial part diminished, to make good the rest; they will Endanger the whole: But these Evils ought to be Cur'd separately, as they arise from separate Causes.

The Circumstances of Foreign Trade are such, that sometimes a Nation can carry Goods Cheaper to one part, than another Nation can; or than they themselves can to another place; and this is plain in the Trade to *Dantzick*.

The *Dutch*, who send several hundred Sail of Ships to *Dantzick*, every Year for Corn, can, without doubt, carry our Cloth for little or nothing Freight, and so in proportion, can come Cheaper to Market than we: Nay, such is the Advantages of the *Dutch* Corn-Trade, such the Differences of Exchanges between the Countries, so much greater is the Value they bring from *Dantzick*, than the Value they send thither, that if they lose five or six *per Cent.* one way, they can make it up another.

From this Cause, the *Dutch* may be suppos'd to Buy our Cloth at *Hull*, *Leeds*, &c. carry it from thence to *Amsterdam*, and from thence to *Dantzick*, and yet sell it Cheaper than we can, because we bring no Corn back, and cannot fail so Cheap by a great deal as they.

Let any Man tell me now, Must we sink the Price of our Manufactures to Answer this?

Let such consider what that means, and where it will end.

I doubt not to prove, That if you did, it would not answer the End; nor are we able to sink in proportion, so much as to make it worth while to Trade, and yet recover our Market, so as to suppress our Rivals.

Thus indeed Foreigners Under-sell us, while they go to Sea in Ships, which do not cost them above two Thirds, or, perhaps, half so much as ours, in Building and Fitting out; Sail at lower Wages, are Cheaper Furnished, and make use of fewer Hands.

It will be time to talk of the Necessity of lowering our Manufactures; and the Price of Labour, when our Navigation is reduc'd to a better pitch, and we are able to Sail as Cheap as others.

In the mean time, I say, we are no where Underfold in our Manufacture, Value for Value. Neither the *Dutch* nor the *French* can make Goods equal in Goodness, and real Worth, and sell them Cheaper.

One sort Imitates our Courser Cloths, the other runs into Toys and Light Stuffs, and by Selling Cheap, pushes them upon the Market, in the room of our Goods, Imposing their Novelty, and Conceal'd Imperfections upon the Ignorance of the Buyer; but real Value always appears in the Usefulness of any Manufacture, and this is apparent in the *English* Goods, in that in spite of all these Falacies of Trade, they yet Sell; for if the Foreign Goods were really as good as ours, and sold Cheaper, we should Sell none at all; but we find the Intrinsic Goodness of the *English* Manufactures preserves them, and keeps up their Sale against all the Imitations or Under-sellings of our Rivals.

Sinking Prices, is always Destructive to Trade, and is Eternally follow'd by lessening the Value, and lowering the Quality: From whence I Argue, and believe it may be made out, if once the *English* Manufactures come to Sink in Value Abroad, they are Ruin'd, their Fall may be dated from that Hour; hitherto their Goodness preserves their Reputation Abroad; and that is the only Dependance we have for their Continuance.

ADVICE from the Scandal. CLUB.

WHAT the Design of the Question following may be, the Society knows not, but abstracted from all Concern in the Party-Cause they give their Opinion as follows.

Gentlemen,

WHether, if the Right of Voting for Members to Serve in Parliament, should be granted to be a Matter Determinable by the Common Law, and consequently by the House of Lords, the Lords, by this means, would not have a very great Influence over all future Elections?

And, Whether such an Influence be consistent with the Safety of the Rights and Liberties of the People? I am,

John's Coffee-house,
Fulwood's-Rents,
March 16. 1704.

Gentlemen,
Your most humble Servant,
P. L. M.

Law is a Determination of Right and Wrong between the Sovereign and the Subject. and between one Subject and another.

If the Law could not Determine all manner of Right or Wrong. There are, without doubt, some Societies that have Privileges and Immunities, not Cognizable by the Law, and none more than the House of Commons; and they, without doubt, have a Power uncontrollable, by the Law, over themselves and their own Members.

But if the House of Commons should have any Right to Determine who has, or has not a Right to Choose them, as the contrary may give the Lords a great Influence on Elections; so that Practice may give the Commons, at last, a Power to Choose themselves.

And the last Question is therefore return'd to the Author of this Letter: "Whether such an Influence be consistent with the Safety of the Rights and Liberties of the People?"

Right of Electing, is now by Charter, or Prescription Inherent in the Freeholders, Burroughs, &c.

To say, a Vote of the House of Commons, or any Declaration of that House, shall limit, prescribe, settle, or determine that Right, is to say, It is absolutely in their Power to Choose themselves; since, by the same Right, they

may Claim to Choose who they will, making themselves Conjunctively the Electors of themselves, separately Consider'd.

If it is not in their Power, it must be in the Law, where all manner of Right is Determinable; and if so, to Commit Men for seeking their Remedy at Law, when they are Abridg'd of their Right, is to Invade the Law it self, is Illegal and Arbitrary, and Declaring a Vote of the House Superior to the Laws of England; and this is so plain a Truth, that the Author is no way shy of Declaring himself on that Head, let the Consequence be what it will.

THE Common Cheats of the Pretenders to Art, are so many in this Town, that the Society thought People were a little too Wise to be Catch'd in such a manner as follows.

Gentlemen,

I Presume to Trouble you with the following Case; which, I hope, will fall under your Consideration, the next sitting.

After having liv'd several Years in a Gentleman's Service, I Marry'd, and set up for a Seller of Belch by Retail; and what by the great Acquaintance I had Contracted whilst in Service, and the good Situation of my House, I fell into very good Business, and begun to pick up Money apace; but I had not continued long in this thriving State, before I had the Misfortune to have a Club of Alchymists settled in my House: I must confess, I was mightily taken with 'em at first, and look'd upon 'em to be the best Customers I had; for they, Sweetner like, for the first Month, or so, paid for what they had with ready Darby. But alas, this did not hold long; for they not only began to Tally for Drink, but to Borrow Money of me, which I furnish'd 'em with, to a considerable Sum; but the Time drawing on, in which my Brewer and I were to make up our Accounts, and being behind-hand with my Landlord, I begun to be very uneasie; which they observing, to stop my Mouth, let me into a Secret, viz. informed me, That they had found out a Way to Extract Silver out of all Base Metals, with very little Charge; and assured me, That in a very little time, they did not doubt to carry it within one degree of the Philosopher's Stone; and as an Evidence of the Truth of what they told me, shewed me


a Piece, weighing about a quarter of a Pound, which they averred to me, was Extracted out of a Pound and a half of Old Iron. Thus for a long time was I busy'd up with the Notion of Extraction, till, in short, they had Extracted the greatest part of my Stock out o' th' Cellar, and that little Ready Money out of my Pocket, which I had received from other Customers: At length my Landlord and Brewer beginning to be very urgent for their Money, and I pressing very hard upon the Gentlemen Extracters, they were forced to break up their Club, and I to break up House, and left a parcel of Old empty Butts and Barrels, to be divided between my Landlord and Brewer.

Now, Gentlemen, If you can put me in a way to get Satisfaction from these Extratting Gentlemen, without going to Law (for 'twill be to no purpose to go that way to work, because all, or most of 'em, are either Suing or Defending in forma Pauperis already) you will do me a singular Favour, who am,

Mint,
March 13.
1704.

Gentlemen,
Your humble Servant,
P. P.

To this Enquiry, the Society have only this to say, The Ale-seller has nothing to do, but to be Wiser next time; and to do as they do at Tyburn, Desire all good People to take warning by their Example.

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